

PILLAR BASICS: *Make Disciples*

Introduction: It is our aim at Pillar Church to “Know Jesus and Make Him Known”. In each of our Basics Courses we will focus on three areas of instruction to help Every Member Become a Multiplier in the area of personal discipleship.

In this course, we want to build on the content of the Basics Course called *Grow your Faith* and equip you in three distinct ways.

1. *Biblical Principles* - that will establish an underlying theology of discipleship and the vision for why you should devote yourself to helping others follow Jesus.
2. *Basic Practices* that can help you envision ways to practically multiply the Gospel impact Christ has had on your life.
3. *Being Purposeful* so that you can apply what you learn in the life of our church itself.

Why do we want you to become a multiplier?

At Pillar church we desire to write a story of the exponential power of the Gospel. Our story of multiplication would be displayed by ordinary members of the church who have embraced a vision to become multipliers.

Ten BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES to fuel a discipleship culture in the church. As we look at the following ten ideas from Scripture you will notice they are divided into two sections. The first section will help you gain a broad vision for Discipleship as a part of God's overall plan for His Mission, His Church and His People. The second section will focus on aspects of individual discipleship that you want to be sure not to neglect as you encourage others in their growth in Christ.

1. The great commission is a disciple multiplying assignment, not merely an evangelism assignment. Matthew 28:18-20.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

The assignment that accompanies the great commission is aimed to produce a church with a healthy culture of discipleship that will include: a.) people who are being "converted" b.) people who are being "trained" and 3.) people who are "living sent".

It has a local focus of multiplying disciples among us.

It has a global focus of multiplying disciples beyond our reach.

2. The multiplication of disciples is the primary ministry focus of the local church. Ephesians 4:11-16

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:11-16 ESV)

In Ephesians 4:11-16 we see that mature discipleship is the primary business of the local church. Let's not forget that it includes conversion, integration into the local church, training, and sending. The heart of the ministry that Paul points us to here is the work of nurturing spiritual growth in the body of Christ that fuels the engine of the mission endeavor.

It is the purpose for which spiritual gifts are given.

It is the point of the coordinated efforts and programming.

3. The multiplication of disciples is the ministry focus of every Christian. Ephesians 4:12.

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,” (Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV)

In their book *The Trellis and the Vine*, Colin Marshall and Tony Payne argue that “structures don’t grow ministry any more than trellises grow vines, and that most churches need to make a conscious shift—away from erecting and maintaining structures, and towards growing people who are disciple-making disciples of Christ.”

4. The measurement of our discipleship is genuine love for God and one another. 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; John 13:34-35

We want people to “grow” or “mature”, but what exactly is the measurement that would help us understand if we are making progress. In some settings the measurement may be Bible knowledge, or volunteer hours, or consistency in spiritual disciplines, or any number of other measurements. The good news is that the Bible is clear what the end goal of discipleship is for individuals and it should also be our focus.

The aim of church leaders is to aid the growth of Christians in love.

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. (1 Timothy 1:5-7 ESV)

The other aspects of the Christian life are worthless without love.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 ESV)

The identifying mark of a disciple is love.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35 ESV)

5. The scope of our disciple-making aims at every aspect of life. 2 Peter 1:3-11

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8 ESV)

In the passage above the writer uses the idea of a “supplement” to remind us that growth in faith happens indirectly as we nurture things like virtue and self-control, brotherly-affection, and knowledge. In all of the avenues of life where these qualities may be displayed God is working to cause us to grow in faith. Do you want greater faith? Pour in supplements like virtue, knowledge, or genuine friendship and watch God grow your faith.

Ten **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES** : Part 2

Christian growth is not a linear experience. As we seek to foster growth in one another’s lives it becomes obvious that people are at different starting points and have different aspects of strength and weakness. The following five principles are meant to highlight some areas that we may fail to emphasize or overlook in working with one another.

6. Discipleship is not complete without a commitment to obey the Scripture. 1 John 2:1-6

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15 ESV)

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23 ESV)

Critical to developing a life of following Christ is the clear commitment to value his word and instruction over our own perceptions and opinions. One of the basic insights the Christian faith gives to us is the idea that we have an uncanny ability to deceive ourselves about what is good and rationalize around clear instruction from God. We also continue to face cultural, familial, and political pressures to set aside the teaching of Jesus in favor of updated ways of looking at the world.

**7. Discipleship is not complete without understanding the cost of following Jesus.
Luke 14:25-33**

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26-33 ESV)

Jesus is calling his disciples to:

1. A transfer of loyalty that will shake up the fundamental relationships of your life.
2. A lifetime project that will require the dedication of your most important resources in life.
3. A strategic battle that will call for complete resolve to be victorious.

**8. Discipleship is not complete without a firm grasp of the gospel and basic doctrine.
1 John 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:1-2**

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16 ESV)

If the church is a factory for making disciples then the gospel is the blueprint that sets the design. The doctrine of the church is like the machines that churn out the various parts. The members of the church are like the skilled workers who know how to wield the design and the machines to be effective in the work.

Gaining a firm grasp on the gospel and doctrine creates new categories and language for our hearts and minds to understand our experiences. Category creation is important for growth in wisdom. The ability to distinguish between two seemingly similar things is an aspect of maturity in any discipline.

9. Discipleship is not complete without a commitment to the local church. Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 3:7-11; Hebrews 10:19-25

“since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:21-25 ESV)

Assembling regularly with other Christians for worship, studying the Scriptures, prayer, accountability, encouragement, and mission advancement is not simply a helpful add-on for growing disciples. It is one of the major ways that the Christian life moves from theory to practice.

10. Discipleship is not complete without a desire for the gospel to reach all peoples. Matt 28:18-20.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20 ESV)

When it comes to our work as multipliers in the local church, the instruction to “make disciples of all nations” in the Great Commission is a part of the “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded” in the following verse.